1: Freeman E-5 (1949-1951)1955 OC6 Iban OC6

and the width of the wall facing on to the *ruai* is some indication of the general social standing of the family that owns it. In Rumah Nyala, of the Sungai Sut, the smallest *bilek* was 12ft. 6ins. wide by 16ft. deep, while the largest was 23ft. wide by 17ft. 6ins. deep.

(*b*) The *sadau*. Above each *bilek*, and jutting out over the *ruai*, is the *sadau*, which is a kind of garret or loft. Here, in immense bark bins, is stored the grain (*padi*) grown by the members of the family. Also kept in the *sadau* are the various implements used in farming, and the mats, baskets and trays used when *padi* is being husked and winnowed.

(*c*) The *ruai*. The door of each family *bilek* opens on to another section of the apartment known as the *ruai*, and which—like the *bilek*—is the private property of the family to which it belongs. The *ruai* serves many purposes. Immediately adjacent to the wall dividing the *bilek* from the *ruai* is a section about three to four feet in width, known as the *tempuan lesong*. Here stands the *lesong*, a large wooden mortar, in which the women of the family pound their *padi* with long, hardwood poles, so to husk it. Adjoining this narrow strip comes another section, usually about 10 to 12 feet in width, and completely unobstructed by posts or partitions; it thus forms a corridor or gallery giving access to all parts of the long-house. It is, in fact, a kind of village street, and is used by all the members of the community as a general thoroughfare. Flanking this corridor or 'street' are the *padong ruai*, open, rectangular spaces, one of which belongs to each family apartment. These *padong ruai* are the main centres of community life and social intercourse. Like the *bilek*, of which it is an extension, each section of the *ruai* (composed of the three divisions just described) is owned by a single family. It is the duty of each family to keep its section of the corridor in good repair so that all may use it. But this general use involves no diminution of ownership rights; each family retains the right to cordon off its section of the *ruai* during the performance of certain rituals, and on other occasions to insist (on the pain of fine) that prohibitions governing its use be fully observed by all members of the long-house community. The boundaries of each family section of the *ruai* are clearly marked by the main supporting posts of the long-house structure.

(*d*) The *tanju*. Beyond the *ruai*, and so not covered by any form of roof, is the *tanju*, an open platform, usually about 20 to 25 feet wide. As with the corridor of the *ruai*, all the independently owned section of the *tanju* are joined to form an unbroken, raised platform, which fronts the whole long-house. The *tanju* is used for a wide variety of domestic tasks; in particular it is the place where *padi* is sunned prior to pounding.

4. It is the joining together of a number of different family apartments (each made up of a *bilek*, a *sadau*, a *ruai* and a *tanju*) that produces the attenuated structure known as a long-house. A long-house community is thus, in essence, a village consisting of a single 'street' of attached apartments. It is most important to realize, however, that each apartment is the private property of one family. Figure 2, depicts a typical Iban long-house, in this case, of ten family apartments. Let us now examine more closely the various family units of which a long-house community is composed, for these are the basic corporate groups of Iban social and economic life.

The Iban Bilek Family

5. In Government and other publications the family apartments of an Iban long-house are commonly referred to as 'doors.' A long-house, that is, is usually

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to the *dampa*. The women participating in *nyuma* move about amidst the clumps of *padi* selecting the most mature panicles they can find, but at such an early stage none of the heads is fully ripe. While the grains at the tip of the panicle have hardened, those at the base are still slightly soft, so that if they are squeezed a milky fluid (termed *ai tusu* by the Iban) is expressed. Because of this the *padi* cannot be threshed in the normal way by treading; instead the grain is scraped (*ngerih*) from the panicles by hand with a bamboo 'knife'. This done, the grain is placed in a cooking pot, and boiled until the swollen kernels split open the still green husks. Next the grain is laid out on mats in the heat of the mid-day sun, and when dry, pounded in the usual way with a pestle and mortar. This whole process, from scraping to pounding, takes about four or five hours, and the rice (*brau*) is then ready for its final cooking. To quote a typical case, the reaping and *mata padi* rites took place at 0800 hours, the grain was prepared between 1100 hours and 1530 hours, and the first eating began at 1900 hours.

138. The first eating of the new rice, on the evening of the day upon which it is reaped, is a ritual occasion. Each *bilek* family possesses as part of its hereditary property, a special plate (*pinggai asi*) which is used only during certain rituals. For example, the first meal of a spouse on entry to a new *bilek* family is taken from this plate; it is also used in the first eating of the new season's rice. When all the members of the *bilek* family have assembled, the *pinggai asi*, piled up with rice, is carried to the centre of the room, and placed on top of a *nendak* omen-stick obtained the same morning. A prayer, in consecration, is uttered, and then a small portion of the rice rubbed on the hearth stones, to 'feed' them, and make propitious the cooking arrangements during the ensuing year. Next a share is put out for the dogs—a safeguard this, for it is believed that any deleterious influences which may have become associated with the *padi*, because of bad omens and the like encountered during the period of its cultivation, will thus be visited upon the dogs. Only when the dogs have eaten do the members of the family help themselves (in order of seniority) from the *pinggai asi*, and begin their meal. On the various occasions when I attended these *makai padi baru* rituals, I was always asked to eat first, so that the wealth and other qualities associated with Europeans by the Iban, might in some part come into the possession of the *bilek* family concerned—and a prayer, aimed at bringing this about was always said. The first eating is a jubilant and light-hearted event, and quite often, young men return from tapping rubber, hunting, or some other work especially to participate. The fresh, young rice does have a most delicious tang about it, and is eaten with much smacking of the lips, and such appreciative asides as: "*Manis amat!*" ("Truly sweet!"), and "*Nyamai amat d'empa!*" ("Pleasant indeed to eat!").

139. At Rumah Nyala in 1950, *nyuma* began on 10th February (about 143 days after sowing), and most of the other *bilek* families held their rituals during the following week. All but one of the 25 *bilek* families of the community performed *nyuma*. If a family still has stocks of *padi* from the previous year, *nyuma* is only done once or twice, but those families which have exhausted their supplies tend to continue with this premature reaping rather than purchase *padi* from others. At Rumah Nyala, one or two improvident *bilek* families reaped immature *padi* in large quantities. This is an unsound practice economically, for when *padi* is reaped before it is properly mature a percentage of grain from each panicle is, in fact, lost. The custom of *nyuma* thus helps to initiate (or to perpetuate) a vicious cycle, for excessive 'premature reaping' accelerates the exhaustion of a

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NOTES ON PHOTOGRAPHIC PLATES

243 342 *Frontispiece.* A view of the *padi* farm of the *bilek* family of Kubu, Rumah Nyala, Sungai Sut, in 1950. This farm was one of a series that extended along the crest of a 800ft.—900ft. ridge overlooking the headwaters of the Sungai Nyunggau and the main valley of the Baleh river. (See Sketch Maps 1 and 3). Cleared from virgin jungle in 1949, the land is being cultivated for the second year in succession. In the foreground, young *padi* and cassava plants are springing up. Beyond the farm hut (on the open platform of which are Kubu's wife and grandson), Kubu's farm extends towards that of his neighbour, Kamba (the augur of Rumah Nyala), whose farm hut can also be discerned. Virgin jungle (*kampong*) is still standing on the spur in the right background, while to the left are slopes thickly covered with young secondary growth (*dijap kampong*). Photograph taken on 23rd December, 1950, by Mr. B. E. Smythies.

243 313 137 1. Iban farm clearings in Sungai Saban, Ulu Sut, Kapit District, Third Division, Sarawak. Photograph taken on 3rd September, 1949, just before the firing of the farms. In the background is Mt. Goram (3,073 ft.).

243 137 2. A farm clearing (*umai*) in virgin jungle (*kampong*) in the Upper Batang Baleh, Kapit District. Photograph taken on 27th February, 1949, when the farm was covered with a heavy crop of *padi*. In the lower right hand corner is part of the roof of the farm house (*dampa*) from which the land was worked. Note tree stumps with buttress roots.

342 252 3. Dampa Adin, one of the subsidiary farm houses of Rumah Nyala, Sungai Sut, Kapit District. On 20th February, 1951, when this photograph was taken Dampa Adin housed 12 *bilek* families. The woman on the open platform (*tanju*) is tending *padi* that is being sunned prior to pounding.

000 4. The pattern of Iban agriculture: from the long-house in the valley the surrounding hills have been brought into cultivation. (For this photograph taken in Sungai Bangkit, Kapit District, I am indebted to Mr. B. E. Smythies).

243 245 5. An Iban farm (*umai*) in Sungai Tiau, Ulu Mujong, Kapit District. Photograph taken on 8th December, 1949, when the land was covered with young *padi*. To the left is a grove of sago palms, grown as a scarcity crop. In the valley, a watch-house (*langkau umai*) is in course of construction.

342 137 6. Dampa Along, one the subsidiary farm houses of Rumah Nyala, Sungai Sut, Kapit District. This *dampa*, occupied by three *bilek* families, was still in course of construction when this photograph was taken on 24th September, 1949, and only the central family had finished building the open platform (*tanju*) of its apartment. The felled secondary jungle (*damun*) shown in the background had been fired two days previously, but the burn was a very poor one.

313 7. Felling in virgin jungle (*kampong*). The axe-man is standing on a scaffolding (*tundan*) which lifts him above the buttress roots of the tree. Photograph taken on 1st August, 1949; Sungai Sut, Kapit District.

8. After the felling: secondary jungle (*damun*) drying in the sun. Photograph taken on 28th July, 1949, Sungai Sut, Kapit District.

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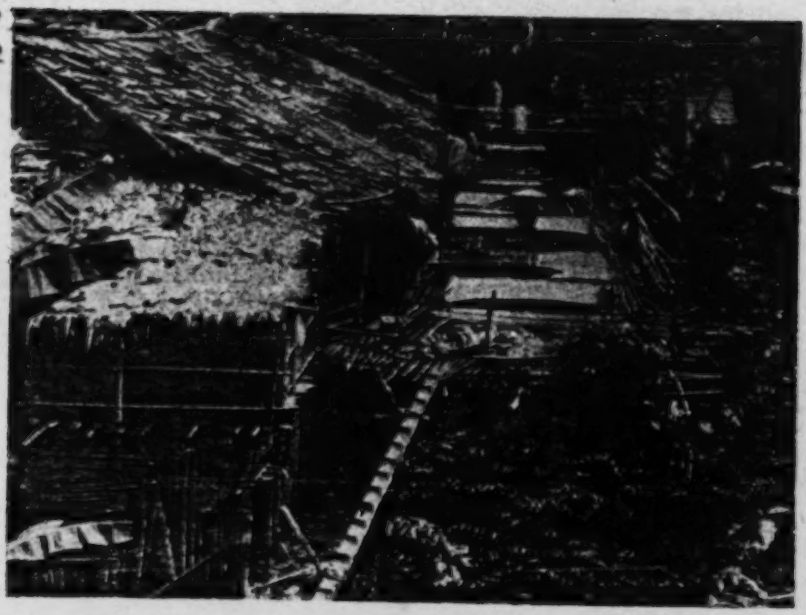

Plate 3. An Iban *dampa* or subsidiary long-house.

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Plate 4. An Iban long-house surrounded by farm clearings, Sungai Bangit, Kapit District.

3: Low G-5 (1844-1847) 1848
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the flesh of animals, as amongst the inland tribes. Nearly all the beasts of the forest are eaten by these people, even monkeys, alligators (if small), snakes and other reptiles are esteemed. Like the French, they regard frogs as a delicate dish, and bestow considerable pains in procuring them: their rice is cooked in brass or earthen pots, called priuks, which they purchase from the Malays; and plates of English manufacture have recently become very general among them. They eat from the plates with their right hand, compressing the rice (which is not cooked dry as that of the Malays) into a ball of convenient size. They know no way of cooking flesh but by boiling it, which they do in bamboos, having previously cut the whole animal into small pieces.

I once saw some Dyaks roasting a monkey, but did not stay to observe whether they did not boil it afterwards, as they generally partially roast these animals to free them from the hair. They have very little idea of flavouring their food except with salt, though they sometimes employ chilis, or small capsicums, turmeric, and ginger for that purpose. The Sebooyohs, who have lived more intimately with the Malays than the other tribes, have very much improved upon their cooking, the methods having been copied from their Mahometan neighbours. As they have no occasion for fire except for the purposes of cooking, their houses have no chimney, and the little smoke which is created finds its way through

4: Roth E-4 (no date) 1891 OC6 Iban OC6

few minutes in the sun before putting on their *chawats* (loin-cloths).

Their next duty is to prepare the morning meal. They eat with the men or not as they please, but they generally prefer to feed with the children after the men have finished. When breakfast is all over they clean up the crockery and brush the floor. The pigs and poultry are fed with the refuse, as are also the dogs.

They are now ready to accompany the men to the farm, or if not required they pursue their own occupations, which are various and manifold. As it is necessary to provide vegetables for the next meal, they visit their gardens for this purpose and bring home with them whatever they may be able to find in them, viz.:—cucumbers, pumpkins, melons, capsicums, &c. Tapioca leaves, cucumber leaves, and sweet-potato leaves are used by them as much as anything else, and they are fond of them when boiled in water.

Sometimes they go out fishing with scoop nets when they have the time to spare, or are desirous of a change of diet. It is the business of the men to provide pork, venison, and fresh fish, but the preserving is done by the women, who smoke or pickle according to fancy. There is never a want of firewood in a Dyak house; one of the first duties of a husband is to provide this, or he gets into bad odour with his wife or mother-in-law. The wood is smoked until every particle of moisture is evaporated out, and it becomes quite brittle and hard. If the women go out in the forenoon upon expeditions of the above kind, they have to be back again by the middle of the day to cook the mid-day meal. If they are busy on the farm, and mean to make a day of it with the family, they take what rice they require with them early in the morning and cook it on the spot to avoid the journey to and fro.

At two o'clock in the afternoon they pound a measure of paddy with heavy wooden pestles to free it from the husk; each woman is provided with a wooden mortar which is placed either in the *tempuan* or thoroughfare, or inside the *bilieh* or room, and two women pound away at each. At 4 p.m. they bathe, and at 5 p.m. they are busy cooking for the third and last meal of the day. After the things are cleared away they hang up the mosquito curtains, and put the children to bed, while they sit up for an hour or two to converse with the men, and retire to rest when tired.

In addition to the above routine of daily labour, they have a variety of things to do, and are never idle. They have to fetch drinking water and to nurse the babies, and when they are tired of carrying them about in their arms, they strap them on to their back with A cloth.

5:Roth E-4 (no date) 1892 OC6 Iban OC6

243 injure the paddy, amongst the rows of which it is sown; and as it comes in at a season when the rice with some is getting exhausted, and the second crop is not ready, it is of great use to the Dyaks, though not so much esteemed as rice as an article [244] of food. On the larger collection of ashes they also sow the seeds of gourds (*gerrok*), pumpkins (*entekai*), a kind of melon without flavour (*junggat*, *kundu*), and cucumbers (*rampu*), of which they are very fond. These trail along the ground amongst the stems of the paddy, to which they appear to do no injury, and continue bearing for some time after the rice-crop has been gathered in. A small quantity of *pulut* is also grown by every family. It is a fine strong growing kind of paddy, but when cleaned and boiled is of a peculiar clammy nature. [252] It bears a higher price than any other kind in the market, and is always eaten by the Dyaks cooked in green bamboos, as it is thought that the ordinary metal cooking pot spoils the flavour. The farm is tabued during the *tugal*.

[417] After the seed has been sown, it is the business of the men to plant a fence (*raja*) round the farm to protect it from the inroads of wild animals such as pig and deer; this should not occupy much time, as the material is ready to hand, having been collected for the purpose previous to the burning, from the *débris* scattered on the ground.

There are many things which sorely try the patience of the Dyaks as they watch with unflagging interest the growth of their crops. It is true the pigs and deer are excluded by means of the wooden fence, but nothing short of the most untiring vigilance, and not always even that, can keep out the numerous climbing and winged pests, such as monkeys, squirrels, rats, and sparrows, some of which are sure to visit the farm as [780] the paddy is ripening. Their sole remedy, such as it is, is to give a feast and propitiate the spirits in the usual manner. A miniature junk is built and filled with delicate morsels, the plagues are then besought to embark for some other country, and the toy is set adrift to float out to sea with the outward tide. [784] During this ceremony the village is tabued for seven days in the same manner as is done when the purification for burning is performed.

342 The next thing is to build a *langkau* or farm house on some commanding or central situation where the family may reside without inconvenience off and on or altogether just as they please until the harvest is over. They have still weary duties 462 to perform before they can hope to reap the fruit of their toil; but it too often happens that these are left to the women and children, while the able-bodied men seek other and more congenial occupation, *i.e.*, either follow a war-path, or journey

5: Roth E-4 (no date) 1892 CC6 Iban OC6

out the smoke or to admit the fresh air. If the neighbours are near relations or intimate friends, as is often the case, a hole is cut in the wall which separates the room to avoid the necessity of a roundabout way into one anothers' apartments, and some villages are so arranged that one can traverse the entire length of the rear section of the building by means of these apertures without appearing on the verandah at all. There is no furniture in the room—none in fact being required. The floor is the occupiers' table and they squat to their meals. But there are plenty of mats to sit upon and baskets to pack their clothes in. Their cups and plates are hung in rows upon the walls as much for ornament as for use. Their valuables, such as old jars, gongs, etc., are ranged on three sides so as to present the most imposing appearance of wealth.

But the room is stuffy and untidy, and no wonder, seeing that there is but one for each family and this one is used as a kitchen as well as a mess room, as a nursery as well as a bed chamber. There can be no absolute privacy unless the door is barred to exclude the neighbours. Boys and girls keep running in and out and the dogs are always on the watch in the *tempuan* to spring in whenever the door swings open. The floor is swept after a fashion but the room is never deserted, and the roof is simply black with soot. The refuse is thrown into the piggery and poultry yard, which occupies the area or waste space under the house. Very little stench, if any, reaches the apartment from the ground, as the floor is raised too high above it to be affected by it. The *dapur* or fire-place is the only real piece of furniture in the room. It is built either to the right or to the left of the door set up against the wall of the *tempuan* and resembles an open cupboard, the lowest shelf resting upon the floor and the upper shelves being of lattice work instead of plank. The former is boarded all round and filled with clay. This is the fireplace and it is furnished with a few stones between which the pots are set. The shelf immediately above the fire is set apart for smoking fish and meat, etc. The shelves above this again are filled with firewood which being thoroughly dried is ready for use. The women, who do all the cooking, have also to keep these shelves supplied from the pile in the *tempuan*. As the smoke from the wood fire is not conducted to the roof by means of a chimney it spreads itself throughout the loft and blackens the beams and rafters until it finds its way out by the open window.[1]

[1] Elsewhere B. L. says: "They make a *palan* or raised platform and under it light a fire and heap it with dry twigs and fill the platform with split wood for drying as *bekal* (firewood). From the fire they take brands for other fires. They drive three pegs into the ground and place *prios* (jar) on top, fill

5: Roth E-4 (no date) 1892 CC6 Iban CC6

The *tempuan* or general thoroughfare is between the *bilieh* and the *ruai*. It is three feet in width and is paved with wood. It is furnished with a ladder or notched stick by which to reach the loft, a family mortar where the women pound their paddy with wooden pestles to free it from the husk, and a pile or two of firewood reared by the men for use inside. This passage is also used by the women to winnow their rice in, feed their dogs, and attend to their chickens, and by the men to wash the dirt off their feet when they come home from their work. The wall of the *tempuan* is sometimes elaborately painted in various patterns, and the spears of the family are thrust into the skirting board so as to be handy.

The *ruai* or verandah is in front of the *tempuan* and is as nearly as possible the same size as the *bilieh* from which it differs principally in being open on all sides and without any partition. It is therefore a cooler and more agreeable place and as such is frequented by both sexes for the purposes of conversation, discussion, and indoor pursuits. Female visitors are usually received in the *bilieh*, but male visitors are invariably received in the *ruai* and only enter the bilieh when invited to do so to be introduced to the women and to share the meals. They sleep in the *ruai* along with the boys and bachelors, and sit there all day when they have nothing better to do, conversing with the head of the family and chewing betel. The floor is carpeted with thick and heavy mats of cane interlaced with narrow strips of beaten bark. Over these are spread other mats of thinner and finer texture. There is a small fireplace between this and the next *ruai* for the men to warm themselves at when they get up, as they usually do, in the chill of the morning, before the sun has risen above the trees; the fire is allowed to go out in the middle of the day, but is revived towards the evening when it is getting dark, but still too early to light the torches.

Some *ruais* are provided with a *panggan* or bedstead with plank sides in one corner of the room for the men to sleep in, but this is not always the case. If the head of the family has made it for his own use and if he be a chief or rich man he will fix his gongs of various kinds around it for the sake of show; his weapons will be within reach and his war dress will hang from the roof where it can be seen to best advantage —a skull cap of wickerwork with its nodding plumes, and a skin jacket decorated with the tail feathers of the war bird of the tribe. But the most valuable ornament in the *ruai* by far is

quarter with rice and fill up with water and when it simmers cover it with leaves. Before the arrival of Europeans the Dyaks used earthen *prions* made by themselves."

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

243 Both men and women are industrious and hard-working. With regard to the paddy-planting on the hills, the work is divided between the men and women in the following manner. The men cut down the jungle where the paddy is to be planted. When the timber and shrubs have been burnt, the men and women plant the grain. The roots of the trees are left in the ground. The men walk in front, with a long heavy staff in the right hand of each, and make holes in the ground about a foot apart. The women walk behind them and throw a few grains of seed in each hole.

When the paddy has grown a little, the ground has to be carefully weeded; this work is done by the women. When the crop is ripe, both men and women do the reaping. They walk between the rows of standing grain, and with a sharp, oddly-shaped little knife they cut off the heads one by one, and place them in their baskets, [482] which are tied in front of them. The carrying home of the paddy thus reaped is mostly done by the men, who can carry very heavy loads on their backs, though the women help in this to some extent. The next thing is to separate the grain from the little tiny stems to which it is still attached. This is done by the men. The grain is put on a large square sieve of rattan fixed between four posts in the veranda of the Dyak house, and the men tread on it and press it through the sieve. The paddy [257] that falls through is taken and stored in the loft in large round bins made of bark.

252 When rice is wanted for food, the paddy is dried, and then pounded by the women in wooden mortars, with pestles five feet long. As a rule two or three women each use their pestles at one mortar, which is cut out of the trunk of a tree. I have seen as many as six girls using

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

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DYAK GIRLS POUNDING RICE

After the paddy has been passed through the husking mill it is pounded out in wooden mortars. Here are two girls at work. Each has her right foot in the upper part of the mortar to kick back any grains of paddy that may be likely to fall out.

A HUSKING MILL (*Kisar*)

After the paddy is dried and before it is pounded, it is generally passed through a husking mill made in two parts—the lower half having a stem in the middle which fits into the upper part, which is hollow. The paddy is put into a cavity in the upper half, and a man or woman seizes the handles and works the upper half to the right and left alternately. The paddy drips through on to the mat on which this husking mill is placed.

DRYING PADDY

Before it is possible to rid the paddy of its husk and convert it into rice, it has to be dried in the sun. Here a woman is seen spreading out the paddy on a mat with her hands. She is on the outside veranda of the Dyak house (*tanju*). The long pole over her head is used by her to drive away the fowls and birds who may come to eat the paddy put out to dry.

[facing p. 46]

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

252 their pestles in quick succession at one mortar. In this way the grain is freed from husk, and is made ready for food.

Each family farms its own piece of land. Much of 423 such work as cutting down the jungle and planting is done 476 by a combination of labour, several families agreeing to work for each other in turn. By this means all the planting on the land belonging to a particular family is done in one day, and all the grain ripens at the same time.

361 When the Dyaks wish to abandon an old habitation in favour of a new one, a general meeting of the inhabitants 166 is held to consider the matter, and the desirability of 623 building a new house is fully discussed. Sometimes it happens that some families do not agree with the wishes of the majority, and these families split off and join another house. If a move be decided on, a few experienced men are deputed to choose a site, and to report on its adaptability. There are several matters to be taken into account. The site must be for preference on rising ground, and be near a good supply of water. There must also be some jungle near, where the inmates can get their firewood, and there must be large tracts of land not far away where they can plant their paddy.

361 When the new house has to be built on the low-lying, marshy ground in the lower reaches of the river, the choice is not difficult. All that is necessary is to choose a part of the river where the current is not very strong. But in the hill country it is not easy to find a site where the ground is fairly level, and can accommodate a large house of thirty or forty families.

342 Before building on the chosen site the omen birds are [787] consulted. If the omens be favourable, all the men and

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

much time on the war-path, and as the women keep the men up to the mark in this respect, and often will not marry a man who has not been successful in war, they are scarcely to be pitied if extra work fall to their lot during the time the men are away fighting.

The women are earlier risers than the men, and retire to bed earlier. They generally go to the river as soon as they wake, carrying their water-gourds with them. They have a bath, fill their gourds with water, and return to the house to cook the morning meal.

The principal article of food is rice, which is cooked in brass or iron pots. When the rice is ready, it is put out on plates. They eat with their rice either vegetables or fish. Sometimes they have the flesh of wild pig or venison, but that is not usual. A favourite method of cooking is to put the proper quantity of fish or vegetables or meat with sufficient water and a little salt into a newly-cut bamboo. The mouth is then stopped up with leaves, and the bamboo is placed over the fire, resting on a stone at an angle of 45 degrees or more. By the time the bamboo is thoroughly charred the contents are sufficiently cooked, and it is taken from the fire and emptied out into a plate. Sometimes rice is cooked in bamboos, and when it is ready to be eaten, the bamboo is split and torn off in strips, when the rice is found well cooked inside—a stiff mass moulded in the form of the bamboo.

When the food is ready and put out in plates, the men are asked to come into the room and eat. Sometimes the women eat with the men; but if there are too many to eat comfortably at one sitting, the men have their meal first, and the women eat with the children after the men have done.

The Dyaks all sit on the floor, which also serves as

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

606 your mother-in-law's presence in your house. Is it not so ?"

"Yes," he said, "we do get on very well now, but it was not always so. When I was first married, her parents were always taking her side against me, and the result was that I was ordered about so much, and found fault with so often, that I was beginning to get sick of it. However, matters soon came to a climax. One day my wife was pounding paddy, and, turning to me, she said: 'This *lesong* (wooden mortar) is not a nice one; will you make me another ?" I said I would, and I went to the jungle, cut down a tree, and made a new wooden mortar, and carried it home. She did not like it. It was, in her opinion, no better than the other."

[252] (I may mention here that the Dyak women like a mortar that makes a great deal of noise when paddy is pounded in it to rid it of the husk. Probably the only fault to be found with the mortar was that it did not make enough noise when in use to satisfy his wife.)

"I was told," the man continued, "to make another *lesong* for my wife. This I obediently did, but I did not succeed in pleasing her with my second attempt any better than I did with my first. I was told to go into the jungle and make her a third mortar. This I refused to do. I said that evidently I could not make a wooden mortar to her satisfaction, and the best thing to do was for us to get someone else to make one, and pay him for it. She was very angry at my refusal, and said that when she married she did not expect to have to buy things which other husbands made for their wives.

"In all this," he said, "my wife was backed up by her mother, who, in many ways, had been making mis-

11:Freeman E-5 (1949-1951)1957 OC6 Iban OC6

with small stones) the process was a slow one: to collect about one *gantang* (gallon) of useable clay took 45 minutes. This amount, said Demai, would be enough for about five or six pots.

When we arrived back at the long-house Runin was busily occupied putting cotton on to a tying-frame (*tangga ajan*)—one of the most complicated processes in the technique of *ikat* weaving. Unable to attend to the task herself she instructed Demai to go on with the next stage in the handling of the clay: the sunning of it. Demai took a small mat (of the kind known as *tikai sengang*) and laid it out on that section of the *tanju*, or open platform of the long-house that belonged to Runin's apartment. Then, from the pile of clay she had collected in her basket she broke off small lumps—each about the size of a hen's egg—and laid them in rows on the mat. (Plate 2). It was by now mid-day. For the rest of that day and during the following morning the pieces of clay were left out in the full heat of the sun. The purpose of this, said Runin, was to dry the clay thoroughly, ready for the next process of pounding and sieving.

The clay laid out to sun, we returned with Demai to Runin's apartment. Soon after we had sat down Mut, aged 18, the son of Runin's deceased sister Giram and a member of Runin's *bilek* family, strode in. He had in his hands several cobs of corn (*Zea mays*) which, so it appeared, he was intending to roast in the embers of the fire that was burning on the family hearth. Drying on a rack above this hearth were the two pots that Runin had made the previous day. As soon as she realized what he was about Runin called to him in an agitated voice to go to some other apartment to roast his corn, giving as her reason: *"Takut priok aku blah"* ("For fear that my earthenware pots should burst.") Mut gave a grin of understanding and at once left—carrying his corn. Here we have another prohibition (*pemali lingkau*) closely resembling that already mentioned. When corn is roasted those seeds which are exposed to the full heat of the fire often explode with distinctly audible 'pops.' It is the belief of the Iban that corn roasted in this way in close proximity to unfired clay pots may result in those pots exploding when in due course they come to be fired. Similarly, there is a prohibition (*pemali getah*) against the use of damar gum in the vicinity of partially completed pots for the same reason that damar—an ancient form of illumination among the Iban—splutters and explodes as it burns.

11:Freeman E-5 (1949-1951)1957 OC6 Iban OC6

323 177 178 462 First, the craft of pottery (except for the carving of the wooden beaters) is entirely in the hands of women. The existence of this division of labour is important, because, among the Iban, the women are markedly more conservative and tradition-bound than are the men. Because of the custom of *bejalai*[20] (the undertaking of journeys for material gain and social prestige), almost all Iban men acquire considerable experience of the outside world, as, for example, by working for a timber company in the Rejang delta or on the oil-fields of Brunei. It is through these sophisticated and travelled men that new ideas and values are introduced into Iban communities. The women, on the other hand, are 'stay-at-homes,' whose experience is limited (but for a very occasional visit to the local trading bazaar) to their own and neighbouring long-houses. These are the women who cling—so much more tenaciously than the men—to traditional ways of thought and action. It is understandable, therefore, that the crafts which are wholly in the hands of women, such as *ikat* weaving, basketry and pottery, are well preserved.

323 415 But there are also more particular reasons that account for the fact that earthenware pots are still being made by Iban women—although recepticles of brass, iron and aluminium can be purchased without difficulty in bazaars such as Kapit. The fact is that, for certain purposes, earthenware pots of Iban make are *preferred* to pots made from metal. The issue here is the utility which *priok tanah* have for the Iban, and it is important to note that this utility is not defined in purely monetary terms. That is, Iban preferences are not determined by the fact that other kinds of cooking vessels can be obtained 'more cheaply' than their own, but that for some purposes in the present estimation of the Iban of the Tiau their own *priok tanah* possess qualities not to be found elsewhere.[21] For example, it is recognized that certain kinds of [252] foods (such as some of the relishes, or *enkayu*, which the Iban eat with their rice) taste much the best if they are cooked in an Iban earthenware pot.[22] Thus, Uyang, a middle-aged man of Rumah Tungku, while standing and watching Runin modelling one of her pots, remarked quite spontaneously: *"Nyamai enkayu mandok alam priok tanah; manis, nadai bau lang."* ("How delicious are relishes cooked in an earthenware pot; they are sweet and without unpalatable taste.") We later found that Uyang had expressed a quite general opinion.

323 796 Finally, let me mention again those pots (such as the large pot made by Binyong of Rumah Tungku) which are used for the

342 a singular variety of inherited rice—which is the centre of the elaborate fertility cult upon which
251 Iban agriculture is based. Also in the *sadau* are kept the various implements used in farming,
and the mats, baskets and trays used when *padi* is being husked and winnowed.

The ruai.

342 6. The door of each family *bilek* opens on to another section known as the *ruai*, which is always of about the same area as the *bilek*, and which—like the *bilek*—is the private property of the family to which it belongs. In an Iban house of traditional design, the division between the *bilek* and the *ruai* is marked by the main supporting post (*tiang bumbong*) of the ridge-pole; thus the rear half of the ridged roof covers the *bilek* while the front half covers the *ruai*. Unlike the *bilek*, a family's *ruai* has no side walls, so that all these independently owned sections are joined to produce a continuous, roofed gallery, which runs the entire length of the long-house. Throughout its length the *ruai* maintains a fairly constant width. In Rumah Nyala, for example, the average width of the *ruai* was about 23ft., while in Rumah Tungku it was 25ft. The *ruai* serves many purposes. Three principal parts may be distinguished. Immediately adjacent to the wall dividing the *bilek* from the *ruai*, is a section about three to four feet in width, known as the *tempuan lesong*.
252 Here stands the *lesong*, a large wooden mortar, in which the women of the family pound their *padi* with long hard-wood poles, so to husk it. Most of these *padi* mortars are fitted with sounding boards which, vibrating in time to the pounding poles, send a lively, staccato rhythm reverberating through the surrounding hills. Here also, in the *tempuan lesong*, firewood is stacked, and fighting cocks are tethered.

349 7. Adjoining this narrow strip comes another section, usually about 10 to 12 feet in width, and completely unobstructed by posts or partitions; it thus forms a common corridor giving access to all parts of the long-house. It is, in fact, a kind of village street, and except on ritual occasions when a family may cordon off its own particular portion, it is used by all the members of the community as a kind of general thoroughfare. The flooring of this corridor section is usually made from bamboo slats, which are springy to the tread. The *ruai* also serves many other purposes in addition to those of a street. It is the site of many domestic occupations; it is here, for example, that women suspend the frames on which to process their cotton (*nyikat ubong*), and later, set up their weaving looms. When religious rituals (*gawai*) are held, the *ruai* is the place where the all-important shrines (*ranyai*) are erected, and it is also the pathway for ceremonial processions (*niti daun* and *ngerandang*), and the invocation of the gods (*timang*). Here too, the spirit mediums (*manang*) perform their principal rites, and here the bodies of the dead are laid during the period of public mourning and ritual wailing which precedes burial.

8. One side of this corridor or 'street' is flanked by the entrances to the various *bilek*, or family rooms, and on the other it is skirted by a series of open spaces which extend to a low wall right under the eaves of the long-house roof. Each family possesses one of these open rectangular spaces, known as *padong ruai*. Varying in width in accordance with the *bilek* of which it is an extension, but always having a regular depth—usually about eight to ten feet—the *padong ruai* is one of the most important parts of the long-house. Floored with adzed, wooden planks, and furnished with huge *rotan* mats, it is the place where the people of the house, and particularly the men, spend most of their leisure time. The various *padong ruai* of a long-house are the main centres of community life and social intercourse. Here meetings (*baum*) are held, and disputes formally heard and settled. Here guests are welcomed with tobacco and betel, and offerings to the gods preformed. The cool and convivial *ruai* is also the site for many minor tasks: the place where nets are knotted, knife handles and sheaths carved, mats plaited, and cotton tied ready for
[321] dyeing. At nights it is the place where the men gather in informal groups to talk about their
padi farms (a perennial topic of conversation), to discuss an omen or a dream, or merely to gossip,
[538] avidly and aimlessly. It is on the *ruai* too, and in the evenings, that the enthralling sagas (*ensera*)
of the Iban are chanted and recited—sagas which tell of the fantastic adventures and miraculous
[673] feats of their culture heroes, the Orang Panggau. By young and unmarried men, the *padong ruai*
is commonly used—despite the prowling dogs—as a sleeping place, and sometimes they construct
[719] for themselves, at the very edge of the *ruai*, and under the eaves of the roof, special bunk-like en-
closures, termed *apu*. The line between the corridor and the *padong ruai* is marked by a row of
secondary supporting posts, which also stand at the edge of the projecting *sadau*, or loft. Close
to these posts, and in tangled, smoke-blackened clusters, hang the highly prized heads, or *antu pala*,
[354] with which so many of the most cherished values and beliefs of the Iban are associated. Beneath
each such cluster of heads is a hearth (*bedilang*) of stone or clay, on which fires are kindled—both
on chilly nights, and during certain head-hunting rituals. It is important to note that these heads
(*antu pala*) are always the property of one particular family, and are never owned by the long-house
group as a whole.

[323] 9. Like the *bilek*, of which it is an extension, each section of the *ruai* (composed of the
three divisions just described) is owned by a particular family. It is the duty of each family to keep
342 its section of the corridor or long-house 'street' in good repair so that all may use it. But this
general use involves no diminution of ownership rights: each family retains the right to cordon
off its section of the *ruai* during the performance of certain rituals, and on other occasions to insist
(on the pain of fine) that prohibitions governing its use be fully observed by all members of the
long-house community. The boundaries of each family section of the *ruai* are clearly marked by
the main supporting posts of the long-house structure, but quite often dwarf walls (12 to 18 inches
in height) are erected on the *padong ruai*. These plank partitions, which make convenient back
rests, further demarcate the various family sections.

The tanju.

342 10. Beyond the *ruai*, and so not covered by any form of roof, is the *tanju*, an open platform,
usually about 20 to 25 feet wide. As with the corridor of the *ruai*, all the independently owned
sections of the *tanju* are joined to form an unbroken, raised platform, which fronts the whole